



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Issue 127 – September 25, 2006

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Last Friday several AOT staff members attended the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau's Annual Meeting at Camelback Inn, A JW Marriott Resort & Spa. I would first and foremost like to congratulate Rachel Sacco and her team at the Scottsdale CVB for hosting an incredible meeting and drawing an amazing crowd to hear all about their exciting programs. The meeting was focused on "Destiny by Design" and the role the Scottsdale CVB members can play in designing the future for this destination. In his keynote address, Terry Jones, founder of Travelocity discussed the future of technology and how that will play a pivotal role for all tourism organizations. The Scottsdale CVB has truly taken the word partnership to the next level, developing innovative programs to promote their destination alongside complementary destinations such as Sedona, Fountain Hills and Paradise Valley.

Speaking of Paradise Valley, I also attended a press conference last week that unveiled some big news for this town nestled between Scottsdale and Phoenix. The property that is being renovated on the former site of the Doubletree La Posada, will officially be known as the InterContinental Montelucia Resort & Spa when it opens in early 2008. InterContinental Hotels & Resorts is one of the most recognized luxury hotel brands in the world and we are thrilled that they have chosen to expand into the Grand Canyon State. Combined with the recent announcement that Le Meridien will be opening its first Arizona property on Tempe Town Lake, the InterContinental announcement shows that Arizona has arrived as a major destination.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Ennen

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

AOT Presents “Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona” Workshop Series

Please mark your calendars for AOT’s newest workshop series, featuring information from the first full-scale “Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona” report. The economic impact workshops will be held at five locations throughout the state, with each presentation being tailored to the counties that are near that location. The Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona report features county level travel data on each of Arizona’s 15 counties, which will give communities invaluable information on the amount of spending and number of jobs tied to the travel industry in their area. This type of data is vital for communities to explain the value of the travel industry to key stakeholders and secure funding for tourism programs. The workshops will focus on providing communities with methods for using the valuable information in the report to achieve their objectives. Please see below workshop schedule for which counties will be reported at which workshop. To register for a workshop please contact Sarah Martins at smartins@azot.gov or by phone at 602-364-3687.

September 27, 2006
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Hampton Inn
245 London Bridge Road
Lake Havasu City, AZ, 86403
Counties to be covered: Mohave, La Paz, and Yuma

October 18, 2006
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Best Western Payson Inn
801 North Beeline Highway 87
Payson, Arizona 85547
Counties to be covered: Yavapai, Gila, Graham and Greenlee

October 20, 2006
1 p.m. – 3p.m.
Little America
2515 East Butler Avenue
Flagstaff, AZ
Counties to be covered: Coconino, Navajo and Apache

November 1, 2006
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf and Tennis Resort

10000 North Oracle Road
Tucson, AZ 85737
Counties to be covered: Pima, Cochise and Santa Cruz

November 8, 2006
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort
7677 North 16th Street
Phoenix AZ 85020
Counties to be covered: Maricopa and Pinal

Trippin' With AOT

AOT Staff Visits Grand Canyon West

Last week, several AOT staff members participated in a familiarization tour to Grand Canyon West, and over the next few weeks more staff members will be experiencing all that is new and exciting in this destination. The Hualapai Tribe is looking to tourism as the foundation of their future economy and they are laying the groundwork with the development of many new tourism experiences at Grand Canyon West. The focal point of this development will be the highly anticipated Skywalk, which is expected to open by the beginning of next year. AOT is participating in several international trade shows and sales missions over the next few months and the Skywalk is receiving a tremendous amount of attention, so it is critical that the staff be as up-to-date as possible on the developments. For additional information on Grand Canyon West, visit www.destinationgrandcanyon.com.

Industry News

Team Up for Success

The Arizona Hospitality Expo, September 27 & 28, 2006 at Cardinals Stadium, has a fantastic lineup of events and seminars for ALL hospitality professionals. Don't miss Breakfast with Champions featuring an expert panel of Super Bowl, Fiesta Bowl and National Championship Bowl pros who will help you create a profitable playbook for these events. Please visit www.azhospitalityexpo.org for a complete schedule and FREE registration. Please call 602-277-6290, if you have any questions.

Airlines Report Largest Domestic Profit Since 2000

A group of 21 selected passenger airlines reported a domestic operating profit margin of 7.9 percent in the second quarter, the largest profit margin for this group since the second quarter of 2000, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics of the Department of Transportation reported Monday. The 21-carrier group consists of the seven largest network, low-cost and regional carriers based on operating revenue. The BTS also reported that U.S. airlines carried 369.5 million passengers on domestic and international flights in the first six months of this year.

Domestic passenger traffic increased slightly, by 0.2 percent, over the first half of last year, while international traffic rose 6.8 percent. (Page C7, New York Times; ModernAgent.com)

InterContinental Coming to Arizona

InterContinental Hotels & Resorts is gearing up to open the InterContinental London Park Lane and InterContinental Boston in November. The London property will reopen Nov. 6 following a \$113 million renovation with 387 rooms, 60 suites, a five-treatment room spa and an Italian restaurant with chef Theo Randall behind the range. The 424-room InterContinental Boston will open Nov. 3 at the base of the Financial District as the brand's first hotel in the city.

InterContinental also announced plans to open a property in Scottsdale, Ariz. The InterContinental Montelucia Resort & Spa in Paradise Valley is slated to open in early 2008. (TravelAgent Central.com, 9/18)

Boom in lower priced lodgings

A boost in quality at US economy hotels is helping to draw business travelers and cost-conscious leisure visitors, and creating a strong demand for rooms. Competitive economy chains are adding upscale features that appeal to travelers across the board. The US's biggest economy chain, Super 8, has free wireless internet in each of its 124,000 rooms. "The rates are cheap. Super 8 charged an average of \$53 a night last year. A full-service Marriott room went for about \$150 a night," said The New York Times. The Ritz-Carlton, by comparison, averaged about \$288 a night.

The boom is also attributable to penny-pinching corporate travel departments, said the Times. Business travelers have also shied away from higher end hotels because of the trend to charge for just about everything, including internet access. Prices at lower priced hotels, however, have not risen as rapidly as the higher end chains. That has helped lower prices by creating a competitive market with a lot of rooms. Upgrades at lower priced hotels include better mattresses and towels and loyalty programs. (Travelmole.com 9/19/06)

TIA to Commission Major New Study on Gay/Lesbian Travel

This fall, the Travel Industry Association will team up with Harris Interactive and a leading gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender strategic marketing and communications agency, Witeck-Combs Communications Inc., to conduct what TIA says will be the most up-to-date survey to examine the preferences of GLBT travelers, and to contrast their preferences with heterosexual travelers. The focus of the study will be to examine GLBT preferences, attitudes, spending patterns and behaviors regarding destination and recreational choices for leisure travel, domestic and international. The study of about 2,000 U.S. GLBT adult travelers will also help to identify the print, online and broadcast media sources that are influential with this market. Details at 202-408-2183. (Special to TA)